**Lent 5 A Lectionary Catechesis**

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| The raising of Lazarus is fundamentally the proclamation of the gospel. The range of the cast of characters is large enough to count us all into the story. Jesus himself is portrayed by John’s gospel here as particularly decisive, tempered by a full range of very human emotions. Indeed these events and the next chapter 12 before we move to the Last Supper, are the turning point of the gospel and of Lent toward the Paschal Mystery. CCC 640 teaches the core of our faith in the Resurrection. Jesus expresses very deep emotions, almost of indignation, at the responses of people to death as a sign of resurrection. While we live in a “culture of death”, we do everything we can to deny it. This may be a time to reflect on a recent trend not to have funerals, even opposing the deceased’s wishes.  |

**FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37, 12-14**

The text is from the very end of the Vision of the Dry Bones and is well paired with the Gospel today and with the proximity to Easter. The prophet is given these words and message for the whole people of Israel just at their moment of darkest despair. The point isn’t even the miracle of resurrection, but that resurrection points us to know and worship the LORD as our God. Resurrection is not a new concept introduced by Jesus; he receives this teaching from the prophetic lineage of ancient Israel, and he places himself in that lineage. Resurrection is challenging to the modern person; at the root, the resurrection is God’s decisive intervention in the providential care of our lives. The modern person rejects divine intervention or any need for this, because the modern person thinks to be able to take care of one’s own self without need of others. The trouble with resurrection is its profound connection to the nature and truth of love, and love is very difficult for the modern person.

**Vss. 1-14: CCC 715** This reference names the effects of the end of days which God will bring about.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | What does the reading mean by “I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live?” Who is the Holy Spirit?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | How does your life show that the Spirit is put in you? In what way are we “dry bones” and without Spirit in our culture?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Why do we have a corporal work of mercy that reads, “Bury the dead?” What does the Resurrection mean for your life now?”  |
| **WORSHIP** | How does the Resurrection point us to worship? How will it feel to go from dry bones to Spirit filled?  |

  **First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 130, 1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8 *De* *Profundis***

A brief psalm of eight verses (the whole psalm is here), like the Miserere Psalm 51, is the ultimate Lenten Psalm and prayer. Both make an excellent penance or daily prayer during Lent. This lamentation is frequently used in prayers for the dead. The psalmist does two things: cries out and trusts. For like Lazarus in the gospel we are all ensnared in the death of our sin and distance from one another and God. While the psalm urges patient and attentive waiting, it also com- mends us to the mercy of God. the psalm comes at the beginning of the pilgrimage psalms of ascent to the holy city of Jerusalem. Our prayers for the faithfully departed have these two qualities; the trusting part is difficult in the midst of loss.

**Vs. 3: CCC 370** “In no way is God made in man’s image.” Our “respective perfections” manifest the holy and infinite perfection of God.

**Vs. 14: CCC 2559** This citation begins with the famous quote by St. Therese de Lisieux defining prayer. This definitional quote should simply be memorized: “Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” Humility is the foundation of authentic prayer.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | “God is forgiveness.” “Forgiveness is the scent of the flower left on the shoe of the one who crushed it.” Discuss the meaning of the quote from Mark Twain. What are iniquities?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | Share your experiences of forgiveness. How does your life reflect trust in God?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share a time when you cried out from the depths and how God redeemed you. Why is forgiveness so tender for God, yet so difficult from us humans?  |
| **WORSHIP** | What part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation leads you to worship? Why does the Mass include so many cries for forgiveness?  |

 **Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Romans 8, 8-11**

For St. Paul, the key word in this text is “righteousness.” Paul’s rhetoric is an accumulation of rhetorical parallels and contrasts. Righteousness, not because of anything we’ve done, but because the Spirit of Jesus is in us. The Spirit is life, even for our mortal bodies which will be raised from the dead, not just our souls.

**Vss. 10-13: CCC** 2285 Under the Fifth Commandment, the CCC comments on the dignity of persons, and here ties in scandal to this commandment as very grave, made more so by the authority, social status, office of the person who causes scandal, including “manipulators of public opinion who turn it away from moral values.”

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | What does righteousness and justification mean to you? To the Catechism”How does the Spirit of Christ come into you?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | What does “give life to your mortal bodies” mean to you on a daily basis? What are our bodies for?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Why then do we share in the “flesh” of Christ? In the Christian view, is the body evil? What is pleasing to God? Name what you think these things are.  |
| **WORSHIP** | Who is the one who raised Jesus from the dead? What is our response to the initiating acts of God?  |

 **Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 11, 1-45 Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead**

The gospel story takes place in four different places: wherever Jesus was, the home of Mary and Martha, some point in Jesus’ approach to their home, and finally at the tomb of Lazarus. The movement back and forth suggests the yearning and sense of disorientation that happens when someone in the family dies. Jesus is presented as steadfast, a sure and certain rock of conviction and faith. The shortest verse in the New Testament is here: “Jesus wept.” Vs. 35 He weeps because of his reaction to the lack of faith and simply because he was a friend to the family. Jesus’ slow approach and John’s description of his feelings are hardly captured by the English translation of “perturbed” or “deeply troubled.” It’s more like “snorting”, twice, in response to their questions and lack of faith. One commentator says because he could smell the evil of death. Notice the grieving of this family in Bethany, and also see their movement toward trust.

**Ch. 11: CCC 994** Faith in the resurrection is faith in the person of Jesus who says, “I am the resurrection.” Some are raised in his lifetime to point to this “sign of Jonah.”

**Vs. 24: CCC 993,1001** Many groups of Jewish people by Jesus’ time, hoped for the resurrection. The resurrection of the dead is closely connected to Christ’s second coming at the end of time.

**Vs. 25: CCC 994** cf. above.
**Vs. 27: CCC 439** A comment on the range of beliefs in the resurrection and Messiah at the time of Jesus.

**Vs. 28: CCC 581** Contemporary Jews by and large saw

Jesus as a rabbi, yet he is so much more as Messiah.

**Vs. 34: CCC 472** The soul of Jesus “is endowed with true

human knowledge,” while at the same time “exercised in

the historical circumstances of his culture and time.” It is

necessary for his humanity to “empty himself” voluntarily to the Father.

**Vs. 39: CCC 627** Christ’s death was real, not as Dan Brown writes in his highly fictitious **Da Vinci Code**, yet it is true that divine power holds him incorruptible. Corruption was held at the time to begin on the fourth day.

**Vs. 41-42: CCC 2604** External goods are not only for one’s self, but should always be seen as an opportunity to serve others, in this way we perfect our stewardship, “stewards of Providence,” causing personal property to be fruitful for one’s family first and others.

**Vs. 44: CCC 640** The first Easter fact is the empty tomb, yet this is not a proof of Resurrection. Mary Magdala, Peter, and John used this evidence to reason their way by faith into knowing the Resurrection. “He saw and believed.” There’s two steps here.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | Distinguish between reincarnation and resurrection in your group. How is it that Jesus and the Resurrection are one and the same thing/being?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | How do you deal with the “illnesses” of your life? In what way are you like Mary and Martha? Where in the gospel story do you find evangelization? Explain.  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What does it mean to you “to die with Jesus”? Locate the statements about the people in the story which requires us to be decisive in our faith. Share.  |
| **WORSHIP** | The awe and wonder of the people at the end of this incident inspire them to faith. How do you respond? What two moments are the acts of worship of Mary and Martha?  |

 **Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Palm Sunday: Isaiah 50, 4-7; Psalm 22; Philippians 2, 6-11; Matthew 26, 1 – 27, 66**